

LORD JAGANNATHA'S RATHA YATRA
BRONX, NEW YORK CITY
MAY 17, 2015
By Jagannatha dasa (SDG)



The New Yoga Pitha 6th annual Ratha Yatra took place this past Sunday on Moshulu Parkway as part of the Bronx Week Parade. Devotees from all over the five boroughs of New York City and beyond gathered together for what was described thusly in the New Yoga Pitha advertisement: "As part of the colorful and lively Bronx Week Parade, the Ratha Yatra is a lively and joyous celebration of Vedic culture for our families and friends to experience and share with you!"

The advertisement also stated: "The Chariot Festival of Lord Jagannatha (Ratha Yatra), the Lord of the Universe, has been performed at the spiritual seaside resort town of Puri, India for more than two thousand years.

This spiritual festival invites all people of all castes, creeds, colors and faiths to join together and call out the names of God accompanied by musical instruments, graceful dancing, and 3 colorfully decorated chariots carrying sacred images of Lord Krishna, Lord Balarama, and Lady Subhadra."



The day was warm and sunny. The temperature was in the mid 80's with very low humidity - a perfect day for outdoor festivities like chanting and dancing for the Lord of the Universe, the Supreme Personality of Godhead, the fountainhead of everything and the last word in Transcendence.

The deities were dressed in royal finery and gorgeously garlanded and the chariots were festooned with an assortment of beautiful fresh green leaves, fragrant flowers and bright, multi-colored cloths.



Prior to the start of the parade all of the different groups taking part were assembled along the parkway for an hour or so waiting for the parade to commence. They were all just standing around with nothing to do but wait. Not so for the devotees. Lord Jagannatha's servants were fully engaged in blissful harinama. They were chanting and dancing to the accompaniment of mrdanga and karatal for the pleasure of Their Lordships, Jagannatha, Baladeva and Subhadra. They were purifying the mundane atmosphere with transcendental sound vibration. They were chanting HARE KRSNA HARE KRSNA KRSNA KRSNA HARE HARE HARE RAMA HARE RAMA RAMA RAMA HARE HARE and JAI JAGANNATHA, JAI BALADEVA, JAI SUBHADRA, and NITAI GAURA HARI BOL!



Lord Jagannatha's chariots were the last group in the parade. In essence the best was saved for the last. All of the different groups had to pass by the New Yoga Pitha group. As all the other participants marched by the Lord's chariots they were inundated with the chanting of the holy names of Krsna.



After the last group went by the Lord's carts began to move. At the very front of the chanting party there was a large banner inscribed with the holy names of Hare, Krsna and Rama. Then there were the matajis resplendent in gold, green, lilac and pink sarees chanting and dancing enthusiastically. They were followed by the kirtana leader surrounded by the men playing mrdanga and karatals. Numerous devotees took turns leading kirtana. All along the parade route devotees distributed prasadam. Numerous bystanders and even members of the NYPD were coaxed into chanting the holy names by one of the devotees leading the kirtana.



As the harinama party of devotees approached the viewing grandstand, at the end of the parade route, the kirtana in praise of Lord Jagannatha, Lord Baladeva and Lady Subhadra reached a transcendently earth-shaking, deafening crescendo. The dancing and singing was just plain phenomenal. Even the radio announcer in the stands commented over the loudspeaker: "Now that's the way to end a parade!"

The Ratha Yatra was more than three hours of spiritually blissful chanting, dancing and prasadam distribution. The organizers, led by her grace Mother Vilasa Manjari Devi Dasi, the founder of New Yoga Pitha, were more than true to every word in their advertisement and the parade lived up to its "lively and colorful" billing.

After the parade the Lord's chariots were parked next to the prasadam booth where devotees took turns serenading Their Lordships with sweet kirtanas.

On a personal note - This fool Jagannatha dasa received a plate of scrumptious prasadam gratis (a *real* devotee kindly sponsored me) and I also received a pocket-size 1972 Bhagavad-gita As It Is and some other spiritual literatures also free. What to speak of the loving, merciful, transcendental association of all the Krsna bhaktas!

LORD JAGANNATHA, LORD BALADEVA, LADY SUBHADRA KI JAI!
BRONX RATHA YATRA KI JAI!
NEW YOGA PITHA KI JAI!

The following is some information about New Yoga Pitha.



Food for Life prasadam distribution.

New Yoga Pitha Inc. is an organization of the Hare Krishna movement, dedicated to Krishna consciousness. New Yoga Pitha was founded by Mother Vilasa Manjari Devi

Dasi and her family, with the goal of serving the society and spreading the joy of Bhakti Yoga in the New York City area. New Yoga Pitha has been active in serving this community for a number of years.

New Yoga Pitha provides a variety of opportunities to the greater community. Regular programs are held on Bhakti Yoga in the area, engaging and instructing in authentic spirituality as taught by the ancient Vedic tradition and the renowned spiritual leader Srila Prabhupada. In addition, New Yoga Pitha regularly engages in food distribution under the Food For Life program, serving delicious, healthy, purified food made with love to those in the community.

At New Yoga Pitha, everyone is welcome. If you'd like to attend our programs to assist in our service, or simply to find out more, please contact Mother Vilasa Manjari by email. We would love to have you join us, and we look forward to connecting with you. Hare Krishna!

<https://newyogapitha.wordpress.com/>
<http://www.gofundme.com/newyogapithainc>